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# Attitudes of parents and teachers toward the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped students.

Lisa Wallace Scheet  
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ACCEPTANCE PAGE

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,  
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree, Master of Arts, University of  
Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

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June 7, 1988  
Date



Attitudes of Parents and Teachers  
Toward the Integration of  
Severely and Profoundly  
Handicapped Students

A Thesis

Presented to the  
Department of Special Education and  
Communication Disorders  
and the  
Faculty of the Graduate College  
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by  
Lisa Wallace Scheet

June 1988

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## Abstract

This study investigated the attitudes of teachers and parents toward the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped students. A five group, single observation study was conducted to determine if teachers and parents with varying amounts of contact with handicapped people would have significantly different attitudes toward the handicapped population. The parents chosen for this study had children who attended one of two schools within a middle sized city in the Midwest. The teachers chosen were assigned to these two facilities. One facility was integrated and had severely and profoundly handicapped students enrolled. The second facility chosen for this study had special education students, however, their handicaps were not obvious and for the purposes of this study was considered a nonintegrated facility. The sample included 33 regular education teachers and 126 parents. The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale-Form A was the instrument utilized to assess the attitudes of the different groups. In addition, a demographic information sheet was also developed and used to collect data. One hundred ninety five surveys were sent out with a return rate of 82% (N=159). All returned surveys were utilized due to the small sample size of each group. Analysis of variance was the statistical method used to analyze the data. Results indicated significantly more positive attitudes in the teachers assigned to the



nonintegrated facility than the teachers assigned to the integrated facility.

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To my father, I wish you were here to share in my accomplishment.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In 1975, legislation was passed giving all handicapped children the right to a free and appropriate public education (Public Law 94-142). Included in this legislation was the right to an education in the "least restrictive environment."

Research has been done assessing attitudes toward mainstreaming and integration of students who are mildly handicapped into the regular classroom (Hannah & Pliner, 1983; Polloway, 1985; 1983; Shotel, Iano & McGettigan, 1972). However, limited research is available regarding attitudes toward persons with severe and profound handicaps. Experts advocate for a wide variety of experiences in a regular public school over a segregated school (Brown et al., 1983).

The integrated setting offers a wide variety of functional, age appropriate learning experiences across recreational, vocational, domestic and community living training. Most importantly, an integrated setting provides experiences with nonhandicapped peers which the segregated environment is unable to provide (Hamre-Nietupski & Nietupski, 1981).

Brown et al. (1983) explain that the segregation of handicapped from nonhandicapped people at an early age develops attitudinal differences which extend into

adulthood. These differences do not usually develop in people who have been given the opportunity to grow up with handicapped and nonhandicapped people.

Brown et al. (1983) explain that attitudes, values, and skills can be taught in both environments, however the segregated environment is "inherently restrictive" making it unlikely that many of the skills needed by both handicapped and nonhandicapped students can be adequately developed under segregated conditions (p. 17).

#### Background of the Problem

The Council Bluffs Community School District in Iowa had one such segregated facility. Beginning in the fall of 1981, the school district initiated plans to close its segregated facility and educate its severely and profoundly handicapped students in an integrated facility.

The school officials felt the attitudes of the people directly involved with the students during and after the move out of a segregated facility (parents, regular education staff, special education staff, administration) were likely to have the greatest impact on how well the integration was adopted. These attitudes determine how much a child would learn in his environment. Therefore, they proceeded with the preparation of teachers and parents in both the closing school and receiving school through various inservice sessions which they felt were appropriate in order

to promote a positive attitude and environment (M. Nuschy, Personal Communication, July 1987; Sendgraff, Personal Communication, July 1987).

Prior to the closing of the segregated facility both parents and teachers were invited to open forums to express their concerns with administrators. A variety of inservice sessions were used to promote a better understanding of the handicapped students and their needs. One was the use of "Kids on the Block" puppet shows. These are commercially prepared puppets with various handicapping conditions such as cerebral palsy, hearing impairment, and mental retardation.

A second type of teacher inservice involved viewing videotapes of the handicapped students in their segregated classroom environment. These videotapes were made to show students during a typical school day. The goal was to promote a better understanding of handicapped students and their needs. Third, the teachers at both the closing and receiving facilities were invited to coffees to become better acquainted before the handicapped students were integrated. Despite these activities, no data were gathered measuring the attitudes of parents and teachers involved with the integration process.

#### Statement of the Problem

Attitudes are an important consideration when making a

change in any environment. The attitudes of the people involved will have an impact on the interactions of the environment (Hamre-Nietupski & Nietupski, 1981; Mandell & Strain, 1978; Mitchell, 1976). Attitudes and how they affect the classroom environment are variables that are not easily controlled, however attitudes can be influenced (French & Henderson, 1984).

Evans (1976) has concluded that positive attitudes are the result of increased contact with handicapped persons. However, other researchers (Anthony, 1972; Hannah & Pliner, 1983; Higgs, 1975; Matkin, Hafer, Wright & Lutzker, 1983) state that contact with handicapped persons is not enough to produce a positive attitude and that information or knowledge coupled with exposure or contact regarding handicapped persons are needed in order to create a more positive attitude.

Saunders (1975) defines attitudes as predispositions of responding in a particular way toward specific subjects. They are not directly observable. Attitudes can be inferred by the way a person responds to a situation or stimulus. Attitudes can be expressed verbally or nonverbally and include a cognitive component described as perceptual, informational, or stereotypical; an affective component involving feelings of liking or disliking and the behavioral component which includes behavioral intentions (Gottlieb,

Corman, & Curci, 1984) or the predisposition of an action toward a subject.

Since no data were gathered in the district regarding attitudes toward the change prior to the integration process, it is not possible to make comparisons about whether this approach did indeed create more positive attitudes in teachers and parents of nonhandicapped students. Professionals engaged in the process reported that parents of the handicapped students agreed to placement but with apprehensions. The parents' concerns included the fear that their children would be ridiculed by the nonhandicapped children in the school and whether the child would actually feel accepted. Altman (1981) reinforces the idea that it is important to consider the attitudes of others regarding the handicapped, since the attitudes held by the majority can reinforce prejudice and discrimination in a society unless dealt with appropriately.

#### Purpose of the Study

Handicapped people are routinely discriminated against in our society (Hafer & Narcus, 1979). It is important that teachers, peers, employers, and other service providers begin to assist in changing these negative attitudes (Donaldson, 1980). Donaldson continued by saying that one effective method of changing attitudes is to provide an equal status relationship. This consists of handicapped

students being enrolled in integrated facilities with same age, nonhandicapped peers. Equal status relationships can be influenced by significant others (parents and teachers) with whom the nonhandicapped peers have contact (Simpson, 1980).

Research also demonstrated that younger children, particularly grades three through six, are more accepting of handicapped persons (Billings, 1963). Additionally, Bateman (1962) found that persons with previous positive experiences had the most accepting attitudes toward the handicapped. The mere existence of handicapped students in an integrated facility promoted more positive attitudes in their nonhandicapped peers than similar nonhandicapped peers who had no exposure to handicapped students (Voeltz, 1982). Research supports the hypothesis that positive experiences and actual contact with handicapped students promote a more positive atmosphere (Anthony, 1972; Hafer & Narcus, 1979; Matkin, Hafer, Wright, & Lutzker, 1983).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether parents and teachers who have had varying amounts of contact with the severely and profoundly handicapped population will have significantly different attitudes toward handicapped persons.

Therefore, the research question to be answered is:

1. Will the attitudes of parents and teachers who have



contact with the severely and profoundly handicapped students be significantly different from those parents and teachers with no contact?

### Theoretical Framework

Katz (1960) outlined two directions of thinking in attitude theory. The first is that people are irrational. Their power of reason and reflection is limited. In addition, they have poor capacity to discriminate, poor self insight, and short memory. The ability to think for oneself is overpowered by suggestibility and emotional forces.

The second approach is that people are rational. They seek understanding of the world around them. Discriminating and reasoning powers assert themselves over time. They are also capable of self criticism and self insight. Getting adequate information to the masses is important to this way of thinking. Communication and brainstorming for exchange of ideas are two ways of obtaining knowledge and understanding the information gathered in order to change attitudes. However, increasing this information does not necessarily mean it will be absorbed or that changes in attitudes will be seen.

Watts (1984) stated that if attitudes need to be changed or even understood, a person must know in what capacity or function he serves. Katz (1960) described these functions as:

1. the instrumental, adjustive, or utilitarian function

2. the ego-defensive function

3. the value-expressive function

4. the knowledge function (p. 170)

The instrumental, adjustive, or utilitarian function assists a person with maximizing rewards and minimizing punishments. Attitudes in this function are either the way to meet the desired end product or avoiding the undesirable one.

The ego function protects the person from the real world through denial. Merely presenting information about an object, and the rewards or penalties involved are ineffective in changing attitudes and will instead arouse fears and anxieties in the person.

Attitudes expressed that are important to the values and self-concept of the person involved describes the value-expressive function. Changing attitudes through this function is twofold: First, dissatisfaction with one's self-concept resulting from failures or inadequacies can change a favorable image of oneself. Second, dissatisfaction with attitudes that no longer agree with present value systems can also cause change. This change can result in suggestions or new experiences from other people.

Lastly, the knowledge function provides us with attitudes that, on a cognitive level, organize and provide consistency and clarity to the world. This function is the easiest to change with new information or experiences. This is particularly true if the person giving the new information is an expert in that particular field (Watts, 1984).

Higgs (1975) stated that having increased contact with the handicapped population automatically increased the amount of knowledge available which ultimately resulted in positive attitudes. Anthony (1972) said that a relationship exists between the amount of contact with handicapped persons plus information together form a positive attitude. Information only, as stated in the functional theories, provides the obvious--an increase in knowledge. Utilizing the functional approaches to attitude change with the added dimension of contact would provide the needed move toward attitude change. This is a necessary step in the integration process.

### Hypotheses

The null hypotheses to be tested in this study are:

1. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of parents of severely and profoundly handicapped students and the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students.

2. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students who have had experiences or contact with the severely handicapped population and the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students who have not had experiences or contact with the severely handicapped population.

3. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of teachers assigned to the integrated facility and the attitudes of teachers with no contact with the severely handicapped population assigned to another facility in the district.

All hypotheses will be tested at the .05 level of significance.

#### Definitions in this study

For the purposes of this study, contact is having association with or being in close proximity to the handicapped students. Levels of contact vary (direct or indirect). Direct contact shall refer to the relationship formed between parent and child or the instructional relationship between teacher and student. Indirect contact shall refer to those relationships that occur in a non-straightforward manner, e.g., the regular education teachers at the integrated facility have indirect contact with the severely and profoundly handicapped students.

Experience shall refer to personally observing or

interacting with the handicapped student in some way, e.g., lunch room, recess, art, music, or parent.

According to the Rules of Special Education governed by the Iowa Department of Education, chapter 12, profoundly multiply handicapped is defined as exhibiting a combination of the following characteristics:

1. Use no means of communication beyond affect responses or use an augmented communication system that is not a standard symbol system to indicate needs and wants.

2. Are dependent in mobility or requires supervision in order to meaningfully traverse between points in the environment.

3. Are dependent in daily living activities.

4. Have minimal social interaction skills and may exhibit severe maladaptive behaviors.

5. Have mental, physical, or sensory handicaps.

6. Have fragile medical conditions, including seizures. (p. 5)

Severely handicapped is defined as students "with any severe disability including pupils who are profoundly multiply handicapped" (p. 6). IQ ranges from 20-35 for the severely involved student and below 20 for the profound student if a mental disability is included in the handicapping problem.

The terms "severely and profoundly handicapped," "severely handicapped" and "handicapped" are educational

terms and may be used interchangeably for the purposes of this study. The term "disabled" is a rehabilitative term and is used in the study by Yuker, Block, and Youngg (1966). "Disabled" and "handicapped" can be used interchangeably and can refer to either mentally and/or physically handicapped.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Included in this chapter is an overview of research related to the changing of attitudes--particularly, attitudes of specific populations toward the handicapped. It will encompass the attitudes of society, teachers, and parents and the effects of contact and knowledge in the changing of attitudes. Studies utilizing attitude scales will also be explored.

There is a paucity of information related to persons who have severe and profound handicaps. Most of the literature relates to the mainstreaming of the mildly handicapped individual into the regular classroom.

Donaldson (1980) provides an overview of attitude research which emphasizes different techniques directed toward attitude change. Included in these techniques are: contact with or exposure to handicapped people, information about disabilities, and group discussion. This review of literature includes studies utilizing these techniques.

Several researchers have used various media formats such as film as the means of measuring attitude change by indirect contact researchers (Donaldson & Martinson, 1977; Jones, Sowell, Jones & Butler, 1981; Siperstein, Bak, & Gottlieb, 1977; Wesolowski & Deichmann, 1980). Two such studies (Hafer & Narcus, 1970; Matkin, Hafer, Wright, &

Lutzker, 1983) investigated prejudice and the fact that it is established in early childhood and influenced by parental attitudes. These authors contend that if people were given accurate information, it would contribute toward a positive attitude change.

#### Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale

English (1971) found in his research that superficial interactions between handicapped and nonhandicapped individuals, particularly when nonequal status or dependent relationships exist, can produce negative attitudes and, again, stressed the need for accurate information in addition to contact.

Hafer and Narcus (1979) and Matkin, Hafer, Wright, and Lutzker (1983) studied the effects of film about disabled people on attitudes of college students.

Two films were used, one a comedy film unrelated to the subject and a second film portraying individuals with disabilities at a residential facility. In the latter, disabled persons were portrayed as wanting a "normal" life.

Two of the four groups utilized were administered pre/posttests while the other two groups were administered posttests only. The groups viewing the comedy film as well as the film portraying disabled persons consisted of one pre/posttest group and one posttest only group. All four groups were posttested utilizing the Attitudes Toward



Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP) immediately after viewing their respective film and again six weeks later.

Those students pretested and shown the comedy film demonstrated more accepting attitudes toward the handicapped, while students pretested and shown the film depicting handicapped people demonstrated less accepting attitudes. The authors in both studies found significant differences (mean scores on the ATDP were higher) in attitudes between the results of the first posttest and the second posttest administered. After the second posttest was administered results in all groups indicated more accepting attitudes toward the handicapped.

These researchers' results indicated that short term negative contact with handicapped people has a minimal effect on changing attitudes toward handicapped or disabled persons.

Saunders (1975) studied college students enrolled in education versus technical courses. Using the ATDP in a pre/posttest format, the researcher found that exposure to a special education course of study did not necessarily change attitudes toward handicapped people in a positive direction. There were no significant differences in ATDP scores between those enrolled in the special education course and those classes pursuing their technical courses. He also found no significant difference between the

variables of sex, age, and grade level reflected in particular attitudes. He inferred, through interviewing participants, that changes in attitudes are more likely to be influenced by a teacher's attitude.

### Professional Educators

Several studies examined the impact of utilizing inservice sessions to provide information as the primary means of changing teachers' attitudes toward the handicapped.

Wood and Seyfarth (1985) studied classroom teachers who participated in three formats of inservice training about handicapped students over a three year period.

This first cycle concentrated on acquainting the participants with various disabilities and assessing their attitudes toward the handicapped in addition to learning ways to develop adapted curriculum. The second cycle covered methods of adapting curriculum for use with handicapped learners, while the third cycle included the specific applications applied directly to the classroom.

The researchers found that teachers who were exposed to long term inservice training exhibited more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming and adapting curriculum for handicapped students, particularly if the teacher has been given assistance with making the modifications. The researchers concluded that ongoing inservice education and

specific assistance to the regular education teacher are two methods of maintaining positive attitudes in teachers. The authors concluded that inservice training also changed teachers' attitudes toward regular education students.

Pernell, McIntyre, and Bader (1985) reported a relationship between knowledge of mainstreaming and a teacher's willingness to participate in the mainstreaming process. They studied a group of elementary, secondary, and special education teachers who volunteered to participate in a three hour credit course on mainstreaming. Their attitudes were assessed using a semantic differential scale administered at the first and tenth class sessions. Results revealed attitudes in the negative to neutral range at the time of the first administration with movement toward the high positive range by the tenth session and the second administration of the scale.

Initially teachers were dealing with their own frustrations regarding the mainstreaming process. These teachers had been familiar with the mainstreaming of mildly handicapped students but were finding more severely involved students enrolled in their classes as well. The researchers found that as the subjects acquired additional knowledge their attitudes became more positive. Increased experience, knowledge, and skills built confidence in how the teachers view their capabilities. This resulted in positive

attitudes toward the handicapped individual, toward mainstreaming and toward the potential success of mainstreaming (Pernell, McIntyre, & Bader, 1985).

Dworkin (1979) suggested that teacher discrimination against handicapped students may continue throughout their school careers unless negative teacher attitudes are changed to more positive ones. She hypothesized that failures of learning were in part due to their teacher's attitudes.

Dworkin (1979) studied thirty-two elementary level teachers. Each teacher was asked to select three students who were educationally at risk and three students about whom they had no concerns academically. A pre/posttest approach was utilized by asking the teachers to complete the Dworkin Teacher Satisfaction Scale (DTSS) on each of these six students. The DTSS was completed before intervention and again three weeks later after intervention had occurred. Intervention consisted of demonstrations of different teaching strategies which were graded in difficulty.

Dworkin concluded from her results that it is possible to change levels of satisfaction in teachers from negative to positive. She also found that there was a difference in the levels of satisfaction which resulted from the teacher's judgement of the student's capabilities. She suggested achieving high levels of satisfaction, communication, and advocacy resulted from concentration on the student's

strengths rather than weaknesses.

Shotel, Iano, and McGettigan (1972) studied the effects of integrating handicapped students into the regular classroom setting and the attitudes of these teachers toward their handicapped students. They studied teachers from a school with resource rooms compared to those from a school with self-contained classes.

A thirteen item questionnaire was administered pre and post the school year to teachers in six buildings. Teachers in the experimental and control groups had higher expectations at the beginning of the school year, however, both groups demonstrated less positive attitudes at the time of the posttest. The experimental group (schools with resource rooms) demonstrated more positive attitudes than the control group (schools with self-contained classes). The researchers suggest that the experimental group had more positive attitudes because of the availability of support personnel from the resource room.

Harvey (1985) studied the practice of mainstreaming handicapped students into the regular education classroom without giving the teacher a choice in the decision making process. Teachers, teachers in training, and nonteachers were randomly selected to take the Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS). Harvey determined that two variables related to the acceptance of mainstreaming were

previous experience with handicapped students and courses in special education.

Results indicated that nonteachers held the most positive attitudes toward mainstreaming the severely involved students while teachers held more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming behaviorally impaired students than teachers in training. Harvey also found that those teachers with previous courses in special education were more confident in their abilities to identify and teach the handicapped students enrolled in their classrooms. He suggested that class size and the lack of preparation in accepting handicapped students were roadblocks to successful mainstreaming efforts.

Mandell and Strain (1978) examined the attitude of the building principal. They saw the principal as the primary person with the most effectiveness in new programs since teachers look to the principal for support and guidance.

They used a fifteen item questionnaire to assess the attitudes of the teachers and principals toward the mainstreaming process. Mandell and Strain found that teaching experience, the ability of the teacher to assess problems, previous teaching experience in special education courses, and participation by the teachers in inservices were evident in those teachers holding positive attitudes toward mainstreaming. The availability of support personnel

and small class size also contributed to their positive attitudes.

There was not a significant relationship between the principals' and regular teachers' attitudes. The authors interpreted this lack of agreement because teachers are directly involved in the day to day implementation of mainstreaming students while principals are more involved administratively. The authors stress that the attitudes of the principals are important in the effectiveness of programs since administrators' attitudes may affect the attitudes of the regular education teachers. The authors found that direct experience and obtaining knowledge does contribute to a positive attitude. Their study indicated once teachers understand the students' abilities, they are willing to have these students mainstreamed into regular classrooms which results in a positive atmosphere and learning situation.

#### Parent Groups

Parental involvement in the decision making process and educational placement for their handicapped children is a relatively new right since the passage of Public Law 94-142, the Education for Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Parents now make decisions regarding the educational placements of their children by attending Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) meetings. By guaranteeing parental rights,

it was assumed that parent participation would improve the quality of the teachers' decisions, the accountability of the school toward the students would improve, and parents would be able to represent their child's best interest (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wheat, 1982).

A review of literature by Harth (1973) found a variance of attitudes of parents. Attitudes of dominance, authoritarianism, defensiveness, and aggression became more apparent with the birth of a handicapped child. Zuk, Miller, Bartram, and Kling (1961) found that there was a correlation between religious beliefs and acceptance of the child. Those mothers who considered themselves religious had a higher acceptance of the child and the handicapping condition.

In the first of two studies reviewed, Meyers and Blacher (1987) reported that not all parents are informed of their rights. They may feel intimidated by the entire process of determining an educational placement. They studied ninety-nine families with severely handicapped children who lived at home, attended a public school and were between the ages of three and eight years old. Information was obtained through interviews with the mother which focused on the areas of "parent satisfaction with the school, parental benefits derived from their child's schooling, parent involvement with the school program, and



communication with the school" (p. 444).

The authors reported that most parents were satisfied with the school, the teacher, and the services their children received. These parents reported gains in skills in their ability to care for their children at home.

The parents who reported dissatisfaction had additional family difficulties, anxieties regarding their children or poor communication with the school. By the end of the study, four families stated that they would place their child in residential care outside the home should the availability of a public school program no longer exist. In a study by Meyer (1980) the researcher found that the variable significantly related to placement of handicapped children outside of the home was the age of the parents and not the age of the children. He found that younger parents were more open to utilizing community placements.

Ferrara (1979) also studied educational placements of handicapped children. Two hundred fifty parents of mentally retarded children were randomly divided into two groups. One group utilized a child specific attitudinal scale while the second group utilized an attitudinal scale directed toward a general population of mentally retarded children. Both scales addressed normalization activities.

Ferrara (1979) reported significant differences between the two parent groups. He found that parents exhibited

positive attitudes toward normalization activities when their responses were directed toward the general population rather than their children specifically. Parents of older, mildly retarded children were most positive toward normalization activities.

The patterns which emerged from Ferrara's study demonstrated that the more severely handicapped children who would less likely be accepted by society had parents with the least positive attitude toward their own children and/or situation. They were, however, supportive of normalization activities as an idea.

Important to parental attitudes is the parent-teacher relationship. Leyser and Cole (1984) sought information from parents of handicapped children about their knowledge base regarding their child's handicap, emotional problems, services provided, contact with the school, and parental needs. They also found that parents exhibited a basic knowledge or understanding of the difficulties their children were having which resulted in the educational label.

Most parents were aware of the services provided in special education, however, they did not participate in the IEP process (Individualized Educational Program), and, in fact, did not know what constituted an IEP. The researchers found that between 40 and 60 percent of the parents

responding to the questionnaire preferred not to be involved with the teacher in developing the IEP.

They also found that there was generally a low level of participation from parents in home/school conferences. Comments made by parents on the questionnaires indicated that scheduling of and transportation to conferences was a problem. Many parents also indicated that they did not gain a better understanding of their child's difficulties by attending conferences and that they felt more confused afterwards.

Despite these negative findings, the researchers also found that 85 percent of the parents surveyed did express satisfaction with the special education program in which their children were enrolled.

Cattermole and Robinson (1985) also found that parents do not want a high level of participation in the decision making process regarding their children. They are satisfied with school personnel making these decisions as long as they are kept informed of the process.

They concluded from their study that effective communication between parents and teachers is important and methods involving direct, personal contacts need to be fully developed in order to maintain positive attitudes between parents and teachers toward the severely handicapped student.

The research reviewed indicates that attitudes are important considerations in the educational process and are reflected in the teacher-student, teacher-administrator, and teacher-parent relationship. Contact and knowledge together have been shown to produce a positive attitude toward handicapped persons, particularly when professionals are available to provide information and support to the classroom teacher.

Parents were legally given the right to make decisions regarding their child's educational placement. However, research indicates there is a wide variance in parental attitudes toward this process. Parents who reported increased satisfaction, also gained additional knowledge and confidence in their ability to care for their child. Research has indicated when communication exists between parent and teacher, educational decisions are deferred to their child's teacher. Research has also indicated teachers who have knowledge in addition to contact with the handicapped population demonstrate the most positive attitudes and most effective learning environments.

### CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Approach

A five group, single observation study was completed. Each subject completed a demographic information sheet in addition to the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale - Form A (Yuker, Block, & Youngg, 1966). The independent variable utilized in this study was having contact with handicapped persons. The dependent variable was the test score on the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A (Yuker, Block, & Youngg, 1966).

#### The Assessment Tool

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (Yuker, Block, & Youngg, 1966) was utilized to collect the data from the groups involved in this study. The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A consists of 30, six point Likert-type questions which address reactions to disabled individuals (see Appendix A).

The Buros Institute of Mental Measurements Yearbook was reviewed for instruments which assess attitudes toward disabilities. Only one scale comparable to the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale was listed. It was the Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS) which is primarily designed for assessing the attitudes of school personnel. This instrument was more limiting in its

language, was an eighteen item instrument, and while its internal validity was good, it lacked test-retest reliability. Despite the age of the instrument of choice, it was selected as a more appropriate instrument to use for this study.

The ATDP was developed in order to fill the need for an "objective and reliable instrument" for measuring attitudes toward the disabled (Yuker, Block & Youngg, 1960, p. 18). The authors decided to utilize the self reporting method in the attitude scale as well as looking at the disabled in general rather than at specific groups. The difference between disabled and nondisabled persons was stressed. The authors also wanted the ATDP to have the ability to be utilized by both disabled and nondisabled people.

Yuker, Block, and Youngg (1966) developed their instrument on the assumption that disabled people may be viewed by nondisabled people as either "different from physically normal persons or as essentially the same" (p. 2). Using this assumption, the authors of the ATDP collected statements describing disabled people as either different than normal people or similar to normal people. Statements in the ATDP were phrased to either describe characteristics of disabled people or how they should be treated.

The purpose of the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons

Scale is to provide a reliable, short, attitude scale which is easily administered and interpreted. High scores on the ATDP suggest that respondents view disabled people relatively the same as nondisabled people. The authors view this as demonstration of a positive attitude. Low scoring respondents see disabled people as different than nondisabled people which the authors interpret as demonstrating a negative attitude.

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A takes approximately ten minutes to administer. Answers are weighted and added algebraically.

According to Yuker, Block, and Youngg (1966) the ATDP-A "has a degree of reliability comparable to other attitude scales of similar length" (p. 33). The reliability of the ATDP-A has been tested using three methods. Based on a single study, the estimate of test-retest reliability or stability is  $+0.78$ . The second method, known as split-half reliability or equivalence, ranges from  $+0.73$  to  $+0.89$ . The stability-equivalence approach is the third method of reliability. This ranges from  $+0.41$  to  $+0.83$  with a median of  $+0.74$ .

The authors claimed validity by comparing groups of disabled persons to nondisabled persons. They assumed that disabled respondents would answer the questions using themselves as the frame of reference while nondisabled

groups answered the questions viewing the disabled population from a general frame of reference.

The authors compared disabled persons' views of themselves as measured by the ATDP compared to those ATD scores of the nondisabled group.

Based on the construct validity claimed by the authors, high ATDP scores indicate positive attitudes and low ATDP scores indicate negative attitudes. "By observing whether the correlations were significantly different from zero and in the direction predicted on the basis of theoretical considerations of attitudes toward the disabled, it was possible to indicate the adequacy of the measuring instrument" (p. 35).

The issue of fakeability was addressed by Yuker, Block, and Youngg (1966) in a study conducted by these authors with psychology students. The psychology students took the ATDP scale under two different conditions. Prior to the administration of the ATDP scale the students were told they were taking part in a research project. In an attempt to have the ATDP turn out favorably, prior to the second administration of the ATDP scale the psychology students were asked to answer the questions in a positive manner. The correlation between the two tests was not significant (+.22) with a t-test score of 1.17. The authors interpret these results to mean that the Attitudes Toward Disabled



Persons Scale is "not particularly fakeable" (p. 36).

#### Description of Student Population

The purpose of this study was to examine attitudes of parents and teachers toward the severely and profoundly handicapped population and the effects of integration. While each subject group had differing amounts of contact with the handicapped population the facilities selected also had different characteristics. Both facilities were elementary level schools with kindergarten through grade six. However, the integrated facility also had classrooms which included Chapter I and developmental preschool classrooms.

#### Description of Students in Integrated Facility

The facility with the severely and profoundly handicapped students enrolled had a student population of 372. These included a range of students with mild handicaps whose handicap was not obvious to the more involved handicapped students with severe difficulties. Many of the severely handicapped students were able to ambulate independently, however, their handicap was obvious. Other students were able to independently move about the building with the assistance of walkers while others were completely wheelchair bound. Some of the students were able to independently move their wheelchairs while others could not.

Some of the students were able to feed themselves, others needed minimal to moderate assistance while yet others were completely dependent with nutrition received through a gastrostomy tube.

These students had alternative methods of communication which ranged from simple signing to communication notebooks which they used by pointing to the picture that represented their needs. This facility had two assigned speech clinicians, one for the nonhandicapped and mildly handicapped students and the other to work with the severely and profoundly handicapped students. Community mobility was an important aspect of this service delivery model.

Many of the severely handicapped students received support services in addition to speech therapy and the instructional service provided. These included occupational and physical therapy which was provided on a consultative basis. A motor activity technician carried out exercise programs prescribed by the therapists for the more physically involved students.

Curriculum in the school program focused on functional living skills with the expectation that these students will, upon graduation from the school system, continue to live at home or in a heavily protected environment. Some will be able to function in a sheltered workshop.

### Description of Students in Nonintegrated Facility

The handicapped students at the other facility, (for the purposes of this study this facility will be referred to as the nonintegrated facility) had mild to moderate learning problems. Their handicaps were not obvious to an observer. The total student population was 499.

Support services were available to these students as well. Speech therapy was provided to many of these students, however, the problems were milder in nature and may have included language and/or articulation difficulties. The curriculum for these students focused on academics. These students will be able to live independently and develop skills to work competitively.

Occupational and physical therapy support services were available to these students as well, however, the number of referrals were fewer reflecting a less severe problem. Often, the teacher was able to deal with the difficulty. Frequently, the therapists gave suggestions to the teacher without the student being added to the therapist's caseload.

### Description of Sample

There were 23 parents of the severely and profoundly handicapped students enrolled at the integrated facility who comprised group one. Other than their own children, these subjects reported less contact with handicapped

persons than other parent groups. Ten subjects had at least a high school diploma with two subjects having had some college or a college degree. Most of these parents felt that their children should attend a public school.

Parents in both groups two and three were active members of their respective Parent/Teacher Organizations and were assumed to be parents of nonhandicapped children.

Since no severely and profoundly handicapped students were enrolled at their child's school, it was assumed for the purposes of this study that the 58 parents in group two had no contact with the handicapped population. However, these parents were four times as likely to have reported outside contact with handicapped people than group one and many indicated that they had friends or relatives that were handicapped.

The level of education in this parent group was generally higher than group one. All of the participants in this group had at least a high school diploma with over half reporting they had some college or a college degree. Half of these parents indicated they thought that handicapped students should attend public school.

The parents in group three had children enrolled at the integrated facility and these 45 parents were assumed to have indirect contact with the handicapped students. Again, most of these parents reported outside contact with other

handicapped individuals, particularly friends and relatives. Approximately one fourth of these subjects also reported having volunteered their time to work with the handicapped population in the community.

The education level of this group differed from group two in that several subjects indicated they had not received a high school diploma. One half of these parents had completed high school with fewer subjects in this group having completed college than group two. The majority of these subjects agreed that the handicapped students should attend public school.

Group four included 18 regular education teachers assigned to a facility where no severely and profoundly handicapped students were enrolled. This facility had special education students, however, their educational disability was not obvious. The majority of these teachers reported some type of contact with handicapped. Some had friends or relatives which were handicapped, while more indicated they had taught handicapped students. The teachers indicating they had taught handicapped students did not report the severity of the handicapping condition. It is assumed for the purpose of this study that these teachers had no contact with severely and profoundly handicapped students. Three fourths of the teachers assigned to the nonintegrated facility had received graduate training or a

graduate degree. Approximately one half of the teachers responding in this group indicated they thought the severely handicapped should attend public school.

The fifteen regular education teachers in group five were all assigned to the integrated facility where the severely and profoundly handicapped students were enrolled. It was assumed for the purpose of this study that these teachers had at least indirect contact with the severely handicapped students. However, only ten teachers stated on the demographic information sheet that they had contact with these students. The teacher groups were similar in the number of teachers working toward or receiving a graduate degree. Most of these teachers felt that the handicapped students should attend public schools.

#### Method of Distributing the ATDP

Surveys were sent by mail with an explanatory letter (see Appendix B) to all three parent groups while the interschool mail was utilized for the two teacher groups. Return envelopes were included. All parent respondents were asked to send the survey back to their particular school with their child. The school then returned both the parent and teacher surveys through the interschool mail. Followup letters with surveys were sent to all nonrespondents after one month. The interschool mail was again utilized. A third followup letter was sent three

weeks after the second mailing in addition to telephoning nonrespondents until the 80% return rate criterion was met. However, rather than using the interschool mail, the groups were provided with stamped envelopes.

Subjects were asked to complete a demographic sheet in addition to the ATDP. Information items included age, sex, amount of schooling, contact with handicapped people, and the participants' knowledge regarding the integration process (See Appendix C). Participants in the five groups were all asked to participate in the study due to their small sample size. Participants in the parent groups were all female.

Permission to survey the teachers and parents was obtained through the appropriate personnel at Council Bluffs Community Schools.

#### Coding and Analysis of Data

Each group of participants received color coded survey instruments. After the completed surveys were returned, answers were then coded. Mean scores of the five groups were compared using analysis of variance.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESULTS

Hypotheses Restatement

The null hypotheses tested in this study were:

1. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of parents of severely and profoundly handicapped students and the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students.

2. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students who have had experiences or contact with the severely handicapped population and the attitudes of parents of nonhandicapped students who have not had experiences or contact with the severely handicapped population.

3. There will be no significant difference between the attitudes of teachers assigned to the integrated facility and the attitudes of teachers with no contact with the severely handicapped population assigned to another facility in the district.

All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Subject Response Rate

Of the 197 surveys mailed, 25 were sent to parents of severely and profoundly handicapped students, 132 were sent to parents of nonhandicapped students with 40 surveys sent



to regular education teachers at two facilities. An overall return rate of 82% (n=159) was achieved.

The parents in group one had a return rate of 92% with 23 parents of handicapped students participating. Fifty eight and 45 parents of nonhandicapped students comprised groups two and three respectively. A return rate of 78% was achieved for the parents of group two with an 80% return rate for those parents in group three.

The regular education teachers at the nonintegrated facility returned 18 surveys (78%) with the regular education teachers at the integrated facility having returned 15 (88%).

#### Analysis of the Data

Responses to the demographic information sheet were tabulated and can be found in Appendix D. The number, means, standard deviations and point range for the ATDP can be found in Table 1. Regular education teachers assigned to the nonintegrated facility reported the highest mean score (M=129.50) on the ATDP indicating positive attitudes while the regular education teachers at the integrated facility reported lowest ATDP mean score of 113.40 indicating more negative attitudes toward the disabled.

The parents of the nonhandicapped students enrolled at the integrated facility had the largest point range of 86 with a high and low score of 162 and 76 respectively,

while the teachers assigned to the integrated facility had the lowest point range, 72, with a high of 151 and a low of 79.

Table 1

Comparisons of Subjects with ATDP-Form A Scores

Group	N	M	SD	Low Score	High Score	Range
1. Parents of handicapped	23	122.57	18.78	84	160	76
2. Parents of nonhandicapped nonintegrated	58	122.15	18.01	83	164	81
3. Parents of nonhandicapped integrated	45	115.42	20.25	76	162	86
4. Teachers nonintegrated facility	18	129.50	19.66	90	164	74
5. Teachers integrated facility	15	113.40	19.15	79	151	72
6. Parents of nonhandicapped combined	103	119.21	19.22	76	164	88

The data were treated using analysis of variance. Results revealed a significant statistical difference between groups (see Table 2).

Table 2

Analysis of Variance

N=159

Source	SS	DF	Var. Est.	F
Among	3625.94	4	906.49	2.49*
Within	56004.33	154	363.66	
Total	59630.28	158		

\* $p < .05$ 

The significance of the F-test permitted comparisons among the five subject groups. These comparisons are found in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparisons Between Groups

Group	T Value	p Value
1. Parents of handicapped		
2. & 3. All parents of nonhandicapped	-.7591	.45
2. Parents of nonhandicapped- nonintegrated facility		
3. Parents of nonhandicapped- integrated facility	-1.7819	.07
4. Teachers- nonintegrated facility		
5. Teachers- integrated facility	-2.3703	.02*

\* $p < .05$

There was no evidence to reject null hypotheses one and two, those which addressed differences in parental attitudes. However, a significant difference was found in the statistical comparison between teacher groups resulting in a rejection of the third null hypothesis at the .05 level of confidence.

#### Other Findings

Written comments regarding integration were solicited from all participants. Comments regarding the ATDP-A were received from 17% (n=25) of the participants with 29% commenting on the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped students. Comments from subjects regarding the instrument were directed toward the need for clarification in the language used on the ATDP-A.

#### Summary of Results

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (Yuker, Block, & Young, 1966) was used to measure the attitudes of 33 regular education teachers and 126 parents with differing levels of contact with the severely and profoundly handicapped student population. Two teacher groups were formed depending on their assigned facility. The parent groups were selected for their level of contact with the handicapped students (direct, indirect, no contact).

There was a significant difference between the teacher groups. The teachers at the nonintegrated facility

demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes when compared to the teachers at the integrated facility. Comments by the participants indicated more negative comments, particularly from parents of nonhandicapped students, regarding integration in addition to some difficulty understanding the term "disabled."

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, FURTHER RESEARCH

#### Summary

Attitudes are developed at an early age and will affect the way people interact with each other and their environment (Hafer & Narcus, 1970). However, attitudes can be changed in a positive direction with knowledge about the subject in addition to contact or experience (Anthony, 1972).

This study investigated the attitudes of teachers and parents toward the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped students. A five group, single observation study was conducted to determine if teachers and parents with varying amounts of contact with handicapped people would have significantly different attitudes toward the handicapped population. The sample included 33 regular education teachers and 126 parents.

The Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale - Form A (Yuker, Block, & Young, 1966) was the instrument utilized to assess the attitudes of the different groups. In addition, a demographic information sheet was also developed and used to collect additional data.

One hundred ninety five surveys were sent out with a return rate of 82% (N=159). All returned surveys were utilized due to the small sample size of each group

Analysis of variance was the statistical method used to analyze the data.

The overall F test indicated that there were statistically significant differences among this study. T-tests between groups indicated no significant statistical differences between any of the parent groups. However, a significant statistical difference did occur between the ATDP scores of the two teacher groups. These results demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes in the teachers assigned to the nonintegrated facility than the teachers assigned to the integrated facility.

### Discussion

In order to change attitudes it is necessary to understand why attitudes are important. Attitudes enable people to understand the world, protect their self esteem, assist people to express values and help people to make adjustments in order to do "the right (rewarding) thing at the right time" (Triandis, Adamopoulos and Brinberg, 1984 p. 29). Utilizing Katz's (1960) functional approaches of instrumental, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge functions may help to explain why there were no significant differences between the three parent groups involved in this study while significant differences did, in fact, exist between the groups of regular education teachers.

The parents of nonhandicapped students reported that

they had contact with friends and/or relatives which were handicapped in some manner. Many parents in these two groups reportedly volunteered their time to work with handicapped people. Hannah and Pliner (1983) reported that information alone, which the functional theories provide, is not enough to change attitudes in a positive direction. Positive, long-term, structured contacts with handicapped people such as these parents may have had (English, 1971) provided opportunities for them to create or promote positive attitudes which, in turn, will increase the amount of knowledge available to these parents (Higgs, 1975).

The parents of the handicapped students have the most direct contact with handicapped people, their own children, over extended periods of time. Knowledge regarding handicapping conditions and educational programs are available to these parents. Research has indicated that when the communication between parents and teachers is good, parents will defer decisions to the school (Cattermole and Robinson, 1985). These parents have the contact and the knowledge needed to cope with their children on a daily basis. A positive attitude was demonstrated from the results of this study.

Contact with handicapped people over long periods of time in addition to knowledge obtained through personal experience or school communication is one explanation for



the data revealing no significant differences between the parent groups.

While the results of this study indicated no significant differences between the parent groups, this investigator assumed prior to completion of the study, that the differences would exist between the parents' groups and not the teachers.

The amount of reported contact from the parent groups was not expected. In addition, the definition of the term handicapped was assumed to have one meaning, however, the parents involved in this study may have had different meanings for the terminology used. Whatever each parent used as their definition for the term handicapped, resulted in increased reported contact outside of their children's school with people who had some type of handicapping condition. All three parent groups demonstrated positive attitudes toward handicapped individuals.

Looking at the definition of the terminology used in this study is especially relevant when looking at the two teacher groups. One teacher group at the integrated facility had the more obvious, severely handicapped students as their frame of reference, while the other teacher group at the nonintegrated facility had those students with mild difficulties and no obvious physical handicaps. While the assumption that these teacher groups would view handicaps

from the same reference point, in reality, this was not the case. Each teacher group may have used the handicapped students in their building to determine their definition. This may be an additional explanation for the difference in attitudes between the two teacher groups.

The teachers at the integrated facility had indirect contact with the handicapped students. Superficial contacts with the handicapped have little effect on changing attitudes toward this population (English, 1971; Matkin, Hafer, Wright & Lutzker, 1983). Contact with these students may have been simply seeing them in the hall or lunch room. While these teachers may have had the knowledge needed, their contact was not enough to move them in a positive direction in their attitudes. One third of these teachers reported that they did not have contact with handicapped people despite being in the same facility. None of the teachers assigned to this building reported that they would be willing to integrate handicapped students if they had more expertise.

The teachers at the nonintegrated facility were assumed to have no contact with severely handicapped students. However, most of these teachers reported contact of some type with handicapped people with most indicating they had taught a handicapped student. One third of the teachers

responding from the nonintegrated facility reported they would be willing to integrate if they had more expertise. The teachers are probably basing their willingness to work with handicapped students on the types of handicapping conditions they see in their own buildings.

The value-expressive function (Katz, 1960) is another factor to consider when looking at the two teacher groups. This was explained by Watts (1984) as attitudes expressed that are important to the self-concept and values of the person. The teachers at the nonintegrated facility may enjoy working with handicapped students because of the satisfaction gained from positive reinforcers. Although the type of handicapped student these subjects indicated they had taught is not known, only mildly handicapped students are enrolled at the nonintegrated facility. It could be assumed few if any of these students had obvious physical handicaps.

### Comments

Comments were solicited from all subjects with many comments coming from each of the five groups. Overall, comments made on the ATDP-A consisted of qualifying remarks on specific questions (e.g., "Depends on their disability" or "Depends where they are in accepting their disability") and words underlined or circled with comments. Several subjects thought the instrument was vague, misleading or

biased while other subjects had difficulty with the word disabled (e.g., "A definition of disabled would be very valuable.") Some participants wanted to know if the questions were referring to mentally or physically disabled (e.g., "Is handicapped referring only to physical or also mental?")

Comments received on the demographic information sheet had several themes - both negative and positive about the integration process.

#### Negative Comments

In the first category of comments, participants seemed to feel that the severely and profoundly handicapped students should not be integrated into the regular classroom. Five comments were made by teachers at the nonintegrated facility, for example "I don't feel disabled students should be fully integrated into normal classrooms as the normal classroom runs per se." Another subject had a concern regarding regular education students, "Teachers cannot be expected to give the extra attention needed to these special kids. With the expectation of us to challenge the talented and integrate the handicapped, we have not the time or energy to devote to the regular. The majority loses out!" Another comment was made regarding the large classes of regular education students now and adding handicapped students would be a certain hardship ("30 in classroom [in

addition to] severely and profoundly [handicapped] disables everyone in the classroom.")

While many of these comments may be judged valid, the lack of knowledge regarding integration procedures of severely and profoundly handicapped students was apparent. Iowa requires a one to five teacher/student ratio in its special education guidelines. It appears that regular education teachers may not concern themselves with special education needs or familiarize themselves with the integration process unless they are required to do so.

Parents also wrote negative comments regarding integration. They wrote that they thought integration was a good idea in principle, however, they did not like the added hardship on the classroom teacher or the possibility that handicapped students might be the object of ridicule, ". . . It's as if they are on display and many children make fun of and take advantage of them."

Additional negative comments focused more on the visible differences between the handicapped students and the nonhandicapped students. Parents with nonhandicapped children enrolled at the integrated facility wrote the most about this concern. Eating with the handicapped students was most frequently commented about, ". . . pretty messy and it ruins the other children's appetite." Other parents did not want their child sitting next to someone who drooled.

Some thought noise was a problem or that the nonhandicapped children were the distraction and the handicapped were better off at a separate facility, ". . . what I have seen of [the] integration of students, they were a lot [more] happy as a whole in their own school." Yet another comment was made regarding the "unfairness" of the handicapped students having air conditioning while the nonhandicapped students do not.

#### Positive Comments

The need for inservice and training were the subject of comments made by participants in three different sample groups. They were positive in their comments toward integration but felt there had not been enough effort done to provide additional inservice and training to parents and teachers.

Many additional positive comments were made primarily by the two parent groups with nonhandicapped students. These parents stated that their children look forward to helping out in the special education classrooms. One parent commented ". . . [students] eagerly await a note to be put in their lockers telling them they are the helpers for the day. . . . I can honestly say that I have learned a great deal too." Another comment included, "his association with handicapped children was very beneficial to him. His compassion and understanding is beyond anything I could have

hoped for," while another parent expressed "I feel that if they are exposed [to handicapped children] at a young age they have a chance to have some of their questions answered and feel more comfortable." One parent appeared very proud of her child and commented, "My little girl is learning sign language."

Other parents commented on how positive they thought integration was and that they encourage interaction between the handicapped and nonhandicapped children.

### Confounding Factors

It appears that there existed confusion in the interpretation of the ATDP-A questions. Subjects appeared to have difficulty applying the questions to disabled persons in general. Many subjects felt they needed to apply the question to a specific child or disability before being able to answer the question. Many subjects appeared to have different definitions of the word "disabled," ranging from severe to mildly handicapped.

Yuker, Block and Youngg (1966) addressed the issue of confusion with the word disabled in the statements of the ATDP. They stated in their study that other researchers attempted to substitute specific disabilities for the word disabled. The authors realize that the term "disabled" may have different meanings for people, however, they found that most of the modifications made on the ATDP did not appear to

have "improved the unity of the scale" (p. 42).

There were more comments reflecting difficulty with the instrument by parents of nonhandicapped students enrolled at the nonintegrated facility than either the parents of the severely handicapped students or the parents of nonhandicapped students enrolled at the integrated facility.

Another factor that appeared to lead to some confusion was on the demographic information sheet. The question addressed whether the subject had contact or experience with a handicapped individual. Subjects who answered yes to having contact with handicapped people also responded to some questions indicating they had no contact with handicapped persons.

If this study were to be replicated it would be advisable not to use an interagency van to mail surveys back or to entrust that students would return the surveys back to school safely. Return of the surveys by direct mail would be a better choice. When making follow up telephone calls to respondents, this was a concern that many subjects had. Some subjects stated that they sent the survey as instructed to school with their children to be returned on the interagency van. However, some of the surveys apparently were lost by doing this.

The issue of confidentiality was also raised by one subject. This subject was fearful of returning the survey



to school versus direct mailing in the event the teacher opened the envelope. The subject indicated this could have compromised her position in the community.

### Conclusions

Only very general conclusions can be made from the data in this study. Present literature focuses on attitudes toward the mildly handicapped and may not be applicable toward the severely and profoundly handicapped. First, subjects in all three parent groups had direct contact with handicapped individuals. The positive attitudes expressed by these subjects may be a reflection of their life experiences, particularly the quality and longevity of their contact with the handicapped. Knowledge is gained from contact. People who have had positive experiences with handicapped persons, will continue to seek other positive experiences.

Second, the lack of description of the term "disabled" and the population referred to in the instrument raised a number of respondent questions. These were directed toward seeking clarification and greater precision about the subjects referred to in the instrument. Over one-fourth of the participants wrote clarifying comments or underlined words on the instrument before responding to individual items, leading to the author's conclusion that the respondents had difficulty with the terminology and the

generalization of the statements to a broader group of disabled individuals.

### Further Research

Further research could be explored in five different directions. First, the difficulty encountered with the interpretation of terminology on the ATDP-A would lead to the suggestion that a new instrument be devised or the ATDP-A be revised to include specific terminology. Not only would definitions of the terminology be beneficial but it would insure uniform interpretation.

There is presently a paucity of information regarding integration of the severely and profoundly handicapped students. Some rural communities in Iowa have recently begun the move toward integration of these students into regular education facilities and into the community. It would be interesting to compare, with the utilization of pre and posttesting, if there exists differences in attitudes over time. The questions, anxieties and difficulties parents and educators foresee could be addressed through this type of study.

Third, since most of the literature currently available reflects attitudes toward the mildly handicapped. Studies focusing on people's attitudes toward those with more severe disabilities are necessary to fill the void in the particular area of research. Also advantageous as a study would be the

comparison of how the more obvious physical aspects of a handicapping condition would affect attitudes toward the handicapped in general.

Fourth, a few of the comments written by parents of both handicapped and nonhandicapped students indicated some dissatisfaction with the actual process of integration. They indicated that perhaps integration was not a good idea and that segregation would still be beneficial. While this is not the direction currently taken by the educational community, perhaps a study looking into what parents actually thought about integration versus segregation would be beneficial.

Lastly, further research might also be conducted to compare the effects of socioeconomic status and educational level on parent and teacher attitudes towards the handicapped. A comparison of parents and teachers involved with one facility versus parents and teachers from another facility would be interesting to compare, with the variables previously mentioned, involved.

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## APPENDIX A

## ATDP SCALE - FORM A

## CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Mark each statement in the left margin according to how much you agree or disagree with it. PLEASE MARK EVERY ONE. Write 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6; depending on how you feel in each case.

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1: I AGREE VERY MUCH   | 4: I DISAGREE A LITTLE    |
| 2: I AGREE PRETTY MUCH | 5: I DISAGREE PRETTY MUCH |
| 3: I AGREE A LITTLE    | 6: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH   |

- \_\_\_ 1. Disabled people are often unfriendly.
- \_\_\_ 2. Disabled people should not have to compete for jobs with physically normal persons.
- \_\_\_ 3. Disabled people are more emotional than other people.
- \_\_\_ 4. Most disabled persons are more self-conscious than other people.
- \_\_\_ 5. We should expect just as much from disabled as from non-disabled persons.
- \_\_\_ 6. Disabled workers cannot be as successful as other workers.
- \_\_\_ 7. Disabled people usually do not make much of a contribution to society.
- \_\_\_ 8. Most non-disabled people would not want to marry anyone who is physically disabled.
- \_\_\_ 9. Disabled people show as much enthusiasm as other people.
- \_\_\_ 10. Disabled persons are usually more sensitive than other people.
- \_\_\_ 11. Severely disabled persons are usually untidy.
- \_\_\_ 12. Most disabled people feel that they are as good as other people.
- \_\_\_ 13. The driving test given to a disabled person should be more severe than the one given to the non-disabled.
- \_\_\_ 14. Disabled people are usually sociable.
- \_\_\_ 15. Disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.
- \_\_\_ 16. Severely disabled persons probably worry more about their health than those who have minor disabilities.
- \_\_\_ 17. Most disabled persons are not dissatisfied with themselves.

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1: I AGREE VERY MUCH   | 4: I DISAGREE A LITTLE    |
| 2: I AGREE PRETTY MUCH | 5: I DISAGREE PRETTY MUCH |
| 3: I AGREE A LITTLE    | 6: I DISAGREE VERY MUCH   |

- \_\_\_ 18. There are more misfits among disabled persons than among non-disabled persons.
- \_\_\_ 19. Most disabled persons do not get discouraged easily.
- \_\_\_ 20. Most disabled persons resent physically normal people.
- \_\_\_ 21. Disabled children should compete with physically normal children.
- \_\_\_ 22. Most disabled persons can take care of themselves.
- \_\_\_ 23. It would be best if disabled persons would live and work with non-disabled persons.
- \_\_\_ 24. Most severely disabled people are just as ambitious as physically normal persons.
- \_\_\_ 25. Disabled people are just as self-confident as other people.
- \_\_\_ 26. Most disabled persons want more affection and praise than other people.
- \_\_\_ 27. Physically disabled persons are often less intelligent than non-disabled ones.
- \_\_\_ 28. Most disabled persons are different from non-disabled people.
- \_\_\_ 29. Disabled persons don't want any more sympathy than other people.
- \_\_\_ 30. The way disabled people act is irritating.

Please return to:  
Lisa Scheet  
P.O. Box 1708  
Council Bluffs, IA 51502

## APPENDIX B



University of  
Nebraska  
at Omaha

College of Education  
Department of Counseling (402) 554-2727  
and Special Education (402) 554-2201  
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0167

P.O. Box 1708  
Council Bluffs, IA 51502  
December 2, 1987

Dear Teacher,

I am presently completing a study as part of my Master's Degree program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I am assessing the attitudes of parents and teachers toward the severely and profoundly handicapped.

Three parent groups from designated schools have been selected to participate as well as two teacher groups. Each group has a different amount of contact with the handicapped students.

Permission to complete this study has been granted by Warren Weber, Director of Curriculum for Council Bluffs Community Schools.

I would appreciate it very much if you would take a few minutes of your time to fill out the survey and return it to me in the enclosed envelope by December 9, 1987. I would appreciate your responding to every item on both the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP) and the demographic information sheet.

Participation is voluntary. Confidentiality will be protected. The use of the code number on the survey is utilized only for the purpose of keeping the surveys together.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to call me at the numbers listed below. Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Lisa Scheet  
Graduate Student  
(w) 712-322-7354

Sandra K. Squires  
Graduate Advisor  
(w) 402-554-2203



University of  
Nebraska  
at Omaha

College of Education  
Department of Counseling (402) 554-2727  
and Special Education (402) 554-2201  
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0167

P.O. Box 1708  
Council Bluffs, IA 51502  
November 30, 1987

Dear Parent,

I am presently completing a study as part of my Master's Degree program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. I am assessing the attitudes of parents and teachers toward the severely and profoundly handicapped.

Three parent groups from designated schools have been selected. Each group has a different amount of contact with handicapped students. Two teacher groups have been selected.

Permission to complete this study has been granted by Warren Weber, Director of Curriculum for Council Bluffs Community Schools.

I would appreciate it very much if you would take a few minutes of your time to fill out the survey and return it to the school in the enclosed envelope by December 4, 1987. For the purposes of this study I am only asking mothers to complete the survey. I would appreciate your responding to every item on both the ATDP - Form A and the demographic information sheet.

Participation is voluntary. Confidentiality will be protected. The use of the code number on the survey is utilized only for the purpose of keeping the surveys together.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please feel free to call me at the numbers listed below. Thank you very much for your cooperation and assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Lisa Scheet  
Graduate Student  
(w) 712-322-7354

Sandra K. Squires  
Graduate Advisor  
(w) 402-554-2203



## APPENDIX C

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

CODE \_\_\_\_\_

Please place a check by the most appropriate answer.

☐ M ☐ F

1. What is your age?  
☐ below 21      ☐ 26-30      ☐ 36-40      ☐ 46-50  
☐ 21-25      ☐ 31-35      ☐ 41-45      ☐ 51 +
2. What is your highest level of education?  
☐ below high school      ☐ Associate degree  
☐ high school diploma      ☐ Bachelor's degree  
☐ some college      ☐ graduate training  
☐      ☐ graduate degree
3. Do you think handicapped children, particularly severely and profoundly handicapped children, should be encouraged to attend public school? ☐ yes ☐ no
4. Do you think the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped children into an integrated facility has had an effect on handicapped children's ability to learn?  
☐ yes      ☐ no  
 If yes, ☐ positive effect ☐ negative effect
5. Do you think the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped children into an integrated facility has had an effect on their ability to learn?  
☐ yes      ☐ no  
 If yes, ☐ positive effect ☐ negative effect
6. Have you had contact or experience with a handicapped individual? ☐ yes ☐ no      If yes, please complete the following section. If no, please proceed to parts II and III.  
 Part I  
☐ I have a friend who is handicapped.  
☐ I have close relatives who are handicapped.  
☐ I have volunteered to work with handicapped people.  
☐ I am the parent of a handicapped child.  
☐ I have taught handicapped students in my class.

## Part II

- ☐ My child attends a public school where handicapped children attend.
- ☐ I have a child that interacts with handicapped children at school on a regular basis.
- ☐ I have a child that does not interact with handicapped children at school.

## Part III

- ☐ I have had no contact with handicapped people.
- ☐ I am not the parent of a handicapped child.
- ☐ I have never taught handicapped students in my class.

7. Were you adequately prepared for the integration of severely and profoundly handicapped children into school? ☐ yes ☐ no
8. How did you learn about the integration of the severely and profoundly handicapped students? (Please check the statements that apply to you)
- ☐ From the principal
- ☐ From the local newspaper
- ☐ From the school newsletter or bulletin
- ☐ From a Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting
- ☐ From word of mouth
- ☐ From other teachers
9. To what extent did you participate in making the integration process smooth for incoming teachers and students? (Please check all that apply to you.)
- ☐ Attended PTO meetings
- ☐ Attended inservices
- ☐ Took special education courses
- ☐ Saw a Kids on the Block presentation
- ☐ Attended meetings for parents of handicapped and nonhandicapped children
- ☐ Encourage handicapped and nonhandicapped children to interact

## TEACHERS PLEASE RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING:

- ☐ I have the knowledge or experience needed for participation in mainstreaming students.
- ☐ I do not have the knowledge or experience needed for participation in mainstreaming students.
- ☐ I would be willing to accept integrated students into my classroom if I had more expertise in the area.
- ☐ I create opportunities for nonhandicapped and handicapped students to interact.

Please use the space below for any additional comments you feel would be helpful.

Please return to: Lisa Scheet, P.O. Box 1708,  
Council Bluffs, IA 51502

## APPENDIX D

## Frequency of Response

Group	1	2	3	4	5	N
Male	0	0	0	4	2	6
Female	23	58	45	14	13	153
<u>1. Age</u>						
below 21	1	0	0	0	0	1
21-25	2	1	2	0	0	5
26-30	4	13	14	2	1	34
31-35	7	22	14	5	4	52
36-40	3	16	6	4	4	33
41-45	3	4	5	4	0	16
46-50	0	1	1	2	1	5
51+	3	1	3	1	5	13
<u>2. Level of Education</u>						
Below H.S.	2	0	7	0	0	9
Diploma	10	17	23	0	0	50
Some College	7	26	11	0	0	44
Associate	1	3	0	0	0	4
Bachelor's	1	4	2	3	3	13
Grad Training	0	7	2	5	4	18
Grad Degree	0	1	0	10	8	19
NR	2	0	0	0	0	2
<u>3. Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Attend Public School</u>						
Yes	21	28	35	10	12	106
No	2	27	9	7	2	47
Other	0	1	0	1	1	3
NR	0	2	1	0	0	3
<u>4. Integration Effect on Nonhandicapped</u>						
Yes	18	22	18	7	7	72
No	4	31	25	9	8	77
Other	1	4	2	2	0	9
NR	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pos. Effect	16	15	16	6	5	59
Neg. Effect	1	6	1	1	0	9
Other	1	2	3	2	1	10
NR	5	35	25	9	12	85

Group	1	2	3	4	5	N
<u>5. Integration</u>						
<u>Effect on</u>						
<u>Handicapped</u>						
Yes	17	31	22	12	7	89
No	4	21	18	3	5	51
Other	2	5	5	3	3	18
NR	0	1	0	0	0	1
Pos. Effect	15	24	19	10	7	75
Neg. Effect	1	6	0	3	0	10
Other	2	7	6	2	4	21
NR	5	21	20	4	5	55
<u>6. Contact or</u>						
<u>Experience</u>						
<u>with</u>						
<u>Handicapped</u>						
Yes	23	46	32	16	10	127
No	0	12	13	2	5	32
Handicapped						
Friend	1	26	13	3	0	43
Relative	3	15	8	1	2	29
Volunteered	0	9	10	2	0	21
Parent of	23	4	2	0	1	30
Taught	0	1	0	13	9	23
Child Attends						
school with						
handicapped	12	19	38	7	2	78
Child interacts						
with handi-						
capped	3	10	27	2	1	43
Child does not						
interact with						
handicapped	1	25	2	3	0	31
No contact with						
handicapped	0	7	7	2	0	16
Not parent of						
handicapped	0	32	26	8	6	72
Never taught						
handicapped	0	13	13	4	5	35
<u>7. Adequately</u>						
<u>Prepared for</u>						
<u>Integration?</u>						
Yes	19	15	21	5	7	67
No	3	25	22	13	8	71
Other	1	3	0	0	0	4
NR	0	15	2	0	0	17

Group	1	2	3	4	5	N
<u>8. How Did You Learn About Integration</u>						
Principal	9	2	4	8	8	31
Newspaper	1	8	8	1	2	20
School bulletin	2	2	1	3	2	10
PTO	6	4	11	1	1	23
Word of Mouth	9	25	28	7	4	73
Teachers	9	6	5	10	9	39
<u>9. Extent of Participation</u>						
PTO mtgs	4	6	13	0	5	28
Inservices	4	1	1	2	6	14
Spec.Ed courses	0	1	1	5	3	10
Kids on the Block	0	5	2	3	12	22
Mtgs for parents	3	2	3	1	1	10
Enc. interaction	9	11	10	9	6	45
<u>10. Teachers Only</u>						
I have the knowledge or experience needed to integrate.				5	5	10
I do not have the knowledge or experience needed to integrate.				10	8	18
I would be willing to integrate with more expertise.				5	0	5
I create opportunities for nonhandicapped and handicapped to interact				3	5	8